



QUICK FACTS ABOUT....

Campylobacter

What is *Campylobacter*?

Campylobacter is a bacterium that lives in the gut (intestines) of many animals including birds, farm animals, dogs and cats. These bacteria can cause illness in humans and is one of the most commonly reported causes of food poisoning.

What are the symptoms of *Campylobacter*?

- fever
- stomach cramps
- diarrhea, which is sometimes bloody

Symptoms usually appear 3 to 5 days after exposure. For most people, *Campylobacter* causes symptoms that usually last for no more than one week.

Serious complications and death are rare, but in a small number of cases, infection with *Campylobacter* may lead to a condition known as "Guillian-Barre Syndrome" which affects the nervous system and generally results in temporary paralysis.

How is *Campylobacter* spread?

- Most people become infected with *Campylobacter* after eating undercooked poultry meat, such as chicken or turkey.
- Infections have also resulted from drinking unpasteurized milk, drinking untreated water.
- From direct contact with the waste of infected animals (such as after cleaning animal cages or cat litter boxes).
- Infected people pass the bacteria in their stool and can spread the disease to others directly if they do not wash their hands well after using the toilet.

Facilities where there are clients/patients are not toilet trained, such as childcare centers are at risk for increased transmission.

How is *Campylobacter* treated?

Most persons recover without medical treatment within 5 to 7 days. Antibiotics may be used to shorten symptoms to approximately 2 to 3 days.

How can *Campylobacter* be prevented?

- Always wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Always wash hands with soap and water before eating meals.
- Always wash hands with soap and water after cleaning cat litter boxes, birdcages, or other environments that may contain animal waste.
- Drink only pasteurized milk and milk products.
- **Food preparation:**
 - Always wash your hands before and after preparing food.
 - Wash everything that raw meat or poultry touches including all utensils, bowls, and counter tops.
 - Use separate cutting boards to prepare poultry and other raw meats.
 - Cook all poultry thoroughly. Poultry should be cooked at least 165 degrees F. Temperatures should be taken in the thickest part of the meat and not next to any bone. If the temperature cannot be checked, cook poultry until juices run clear and the meat is no longer pink.
 - Use a clean plate for cooked meat. Never return cooked meat back to the same plate used for raw meat.
 - Marinade or BBQ sauce used on raw meat should not be used on cooked meat.

References:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
[Indiana State Department of Health](#)